

Message Text

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12

ACTION EUR-12

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SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01

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R 171100Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4709

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

C O N F I D E N T I A L STOCKHOLM 2437

FRANKFURT FOR RSS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, SW

SUBJECT: SWEDISH NEWSPAPER FALSELY CREDITS AMEMBASSY RADIO
TRANSMITTER WITH DETONATING TERRORIST EXPLOSIVES IN
WEST GERMAN EMBASSY

REF: STOCKHOLM 2142

1. SUMMARY. THANKS TO THE IRRESPONSIBILITY OF THE SOCIALIST
DEMOCRATIC TABLOID AFTONBLADET, AND THE LATTER'S STORY ABOUT
THE BAADER-MEINHOF ATTACK ON THE WEST GERMAN EMBASSY HEADLINED
"US TRANSMISSIONS TRIGGERED THE EXPLOSION." THE SECURITY THREAT
TO THIS EMBASSY MAY HAVE BEEN INCREASED. OUR POLICE
CONTACTS SHARE OUR CONCERN AND HAVE TAKEN STEPS TOWARDS
CORRECTING THE RECORD. THE AMBASSADOR HAS ALSO CALLED THE
MATTER TO HIGH-LEVEL ATTENTION (SECRETARY GENERAL ASTROIM)
IN THE MFA, SINCE THE GOVERNMENT'S AUTHORITY AND CONCLUSIONS
HAVE BEEN MISREPRESENTED TO OUR DISADVANTAGE. END SUMMARY

2. THIS EMBASSY COMMUNICATES VIA LAND-LINES THROUGH
SWEDISH PTT. OUR FACILITIES CLOSED DOWN AT LEAST SIX HOURS
PRIOR TO THE EXPLOSION NEAR MIDNIGHT APRIL 24 OF SOME
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THIRTY POUNDS OF TROTYL INSTALLED INSIDE THE ADJACENT WEST GERMAN EMBASSY BY BAADER MEINHOF TERRORISTS. NEVERTHELESS, THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC TABLOID AFTONBLADET MAY 13 OFFERED THE PUBLIC A TWO-PAGE SPREAD WITH PHOTOGRAPHS AND ILLUSTRATIONS, HEADLINED "US TRANSMITTER SET OFF THE EXPLOSION," AND CONTINUING "IT WAS PROBABLY A RADIO WAVE FROM THE AMERICAN EMBASSY RADIO TRANSMITTER THAT SET OFF THE EXPLOSION AT THE WEST GERMAN EMBASSY AT 2346 HOURS APRIL 24; THE POLICE INVESTIGATION OF THE EMBASSY DRAMA HAS REACHED THIS SENSATIONAL CONCLUSION."

3. AFTONBLADET IRRESPONSIBILITY HANDS THE BAADER MEINHOF TERRORISTS A CONVENIENT LEGENT TO COVER THEIR OWN BUNGLED HANDLING OF THE EXPLOSIVES, AND TO STIMULATE RETALIATORY ACTION AGAINST THIS OR ANOTHER AMERICAN EMBASSY.

4. OUR POLICE CONTACTS HAVE ASSURED US THAT THE INFORMATION THEY GAVE OUT ABOUT SPECULATION ON THE POSSIBLE CAUSE OF THE EXPLOSION DOES NOT JUSTIFY THE AFTONBLADET ARTICLE. AFTER WE HAD EXPRESSED OUR CONCERNS, THE CHIEF POLICE INVESTIGATOR PHONED THE FOLLOWING ITEM TO THE SWEDISH WIRE AGENCY (TT), WHICH WENT OUT ON THE TICKER MAY 14:

" THE STOCKHOLM CRIMINAL POLICE HAVE NOT YET DISCOVERED WHAT CAUSED THE EXPLOSION AT THE WEST GERMAN EMBASSY IN STOCKHOLM. THE MATTER WILL PERHAPS NOT BE FULLY CLARIFIED BEFORE THE WEST GERMAN TERRORISTS THEMSELVES STATE WHAT REALLY TOOK PLACE AT THE EMBASSY SAYS DEPUTY CHIEF OF POLICE DAG HALLDIN. THE INVESTIGATIONS IS CONTINUING IN COOPERATION WITH THE WEST GERMAN POLICE."

5. TO DATE THIS TT ITEM HAS NOT APPEARED IN THE SWEDISH PRESS BUT WE ANTICIPATE EARLY PRESS COVERAGE OF INVESTIGATION REPORTS ON THE WEST GERMAN EMBASSY EPISODE THAT SHOULD CORRECT THE RECORD REGARDING POLICE IDEAS ON THE CAUSE OF THE EXPLOSION. OTHER SWEDISH NEWSPAPERS DID NOT REPEATTHE AFTONBLADET STORY, PUBLISHED UNDER THE BYLINE OF BORJE HEED.

6. AFTONBLADET, IN ITS STORY, PRETENDS TO DRAW ON OFFICIAL CONFIDENTIAL

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AUTHORITY, PROVIDING NUMEROUS TECHNICAL DETAILS ON THE EXPLOSIVE CHARGE AND ITS DETONATION SYSTEM AND ON THE EFFECTS OF THE EXPLOSION. AFTER MENTIONING "RADIO CENTERS" AND "SECRET ROOMS" AT THE NEARBY BRITISH AND JAPANESE EMBASSIES, AFTONBLADET STATES THAT IT IS THE AMERICAN EMBASSY WHICH IS "ONLY 170 METERS FROM THE GERMAN EMBASSY, WITH A SUPER-ANTENNA ON ITS ROOF WHICH AT ANY TIME OF THE DAY GIVES DIRECT CONTACT WITH WASHINGTON."

7. AFTONBLADET ADDS: "THE TWENTY-FOUR HOUR SWEDISH RADIO MONITORING AT LOVON CONFIRMS THAT THE TRAFFIC FROM THE FOREIGN EMBASSIES DURING THE EVENING OF THE TERRORIST ATTACK WAS PARTICULARLY HEAVY, ESPECIALLY JUST BEFORE MIDNIGHT. ONE OF THE HUNDREDS OF RADIO REPORTS TRANSMITTED FROM THE DIPLOMATIC QUARTERS AT DJURGARDEN DURING THAT NIGHT SET OFF--COMPLETELY UNINTENTIONALLY---THE VIOLENT EXPLOSION WHICH RESULTED IN THE SURPRISINGLY SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF THE OCCUPATION OF THE GERMAN EMBASSY."

8. WE HAVE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION TO THE POLICE FOR THEIR RECENT AND ANY FUTURE EFFORTS TO KEEP THE RECORD STRAIGHT SO FAR AS THIS EMBASSY IS CONCERNED. THE AMBASSADOR HAS INFORMED MFA SECRETARY GENERAL SVERKER ASTROM OF OUR SECURITY CONCERNS, AND OF OUR EXPECTATION THAT THE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT WILL TAKE STEPS TO SEE THAT ITS AUTHORITY IS NOT MISREPRESENTED TO OUR DISADVANTAGE.

9. BONN MAY WISH TO ASSURE WEST GERMAN AUTHORITIES THAT BECAUSE OUR FACILITIES WERE NOT IN OPERATION AND BECAUSE OUR COMMUNICATIONS GO VIA LAND-LINE, WE CERTAINLY HAD NO ROLE IN TRIGGERING THE EXPLOSION NEXT DOOR. WE ARE AVOIDING PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF DETAILS OF EMBASSY COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS BUT HAVE REVIEWED FACTS CONFIDENTIALLY WITH SWEDISH POLICE AND HENCE WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION, IF POINT AROSE, TO EMBASSY BONN TELLING GERMAN AUTHORITIES WE DO POSSESS RADIO FACILITY BUT ONLY AS EMERGENCY BACKUP IN CASE NO OTHER COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM POSSIBLE. STRAUSS-HUPE

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